



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS.

QUARTERLY BUSINESS SURVEY No. 12.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS.

I. LABOUR TURNOVER.

II. VALUE OF STOCKS OF GOODS.

Quarterly Business Survey No. 12 sought particulars of labour turnover during the month of March, 1950 and the results are summarised in Part I of this report. The inquiry was similar in nature to one carried out a year ago when particulars for March, 1949 were collected in Quarterly Business Survey No. 8. Firms which carry stocks of goods were also asked to give estimates of the value of their stocks, so that recent changes in the total value of stocks held could be estimated. The results of this section of the survey, together with figures obtained from earlier surveys, are given in Part II of the report.

These inquiries are conducted on a sample basis. The sample is designed to represent all types of private industry, except rural industries, and returns are obtained from firms employing about 25% of the total number of employees of private firms subject to payroll tax.

I. LABOUR TURNOVER.

Labour turnover is usually measured as the lower of engagements or separations expressed as a percentage of the average number of persons on the payroll during the period under review. In Table I below figures are given for both engagements and separations expressed as percentages of the average number of persons on the payroll.

The period covered in individual returns was not uniform as it depended on the dates on which payroll tax returns for February and March were made up. The figures should therefore be interpreted as applying to an average period of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ weeks. In making comparisons between industries the possible effect of seasonal fluctuations should be kept in mind, but these should not seriously affect comparisons with the 1949 figures.

TABLE 1. PERCENTAGE LABOUR TURNOVER - MARCH, 1949 AND MARCH, 1950.

		Males				Females			
		Engagements		Separations		Engagements		Separations	
		1949	1950	1949	1950	1949	1950	1949	1950
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing -									
Manual Workers	..	9.3	8.4	8.5	8.7	11.0	10.5	8.9	8.6
Other Workers	..	1.8	2.2	1.4	1.6	3.9	4.8	3.4	4.3
Other Industries -									
Manual Workers	..	8.1	7.3	7.1	7.6	9.7	10.8	9.1	10.0
Other Workers	..	3.5	2.8	2.8	2.4	9.9	5.8	8.2	5.7
All Industries -									
Manual Workers	..	8.9	8.0	8.0	8.3	10.6	10.6	9.0	9.1
Other Workers	..	3.0	2.6	2.3	2.1	8.4	5.5	7.0	5.3

It will be seen from Table 1 that labour turnover was about the same in March, 1950 as it was in March, 1949. The separation rate of 8.7% for male manual workers in manufacturing industry compares with 8.5% in 1949. These rates were higher than in other industries, where the rates were 7.6% in 1950 and 7.1% in 1949. For female manual workers in manufacturing industry the separation rate of 8.6% (8.9% in 1949) was rather lower than the average rate of 10.0% in other industries. In all industries turnover rates among non-manual workers are very much less than among manual workers. It is among non-manual female workers that the greatest improvement in turnover has taken place, due mainly to a substantial reduction in the rates in wholesale and retail trading establishments.

Table 2 shows separation rates for various groups of workers in individual industries.

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE SEPARATIONS MARCH, 1949 AND MARCH, 1950, FOR MANUAL AND CLERICAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY.

		Male				Female			
		Manual		Other		Manual		Other	
		1949	1950	1949	1950	1949	1950	1949	1950
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Manufacturing -									
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	..	8.1	7.4	1.4	1.9	11.6	12.1	3.5	4.8
Textiles	..	9.1	9.2	1.0	3.2	9.1	7.1	3.4	3.8
Clothing	..	5.0	6.3	1.2	.9	5.0	5.8	1.6	2.8
Food, drink, tobacco	..	10.2	13.0	1.7	2.2	21.7	13.7	6.1	5.8
Furniture, sawmilling, woodworking	..	11.6	9.9	2.0	.3	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Paper, printing	..	4.5	4.8	1.2	.9	6.6	9.3	2.5	2.1
Other manufacturing	..	8.3	8.5	1.2	1.4	7.5	13.2	2.7	5.0
All manufacturing	..	8.5	8.7	1.4	1.6	8.9	8.6	3.4	4.3
Mining	..	3.4	4.1	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Building	..	10.7	8.4	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Road Transport	..	6.7	7.4	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Banks, Insurance and other finance	..	(b)	(b)	1.1	1.4	(b)	(b)	7.6	3.2
Wholesale Trade	..	5.6	8.1	2.3	1.4	4.9	7.6	10.6	3.4
Retail Trade	..	5.1	5.6	4.8	3.0	5.5	6.3	6.6	5.9
All other (a)	..	9.6	10.4	2.4	3.7	11.1	13.4	9.3	8.6
All Industry (a)	..	8.0	8.3	2.3	2.1	9.0	9.1	7.0	5.3

(a) Excludes shipping and stevedoring.

(b) Included with "all other".

(c) Included with "other manufacturing".

Turnover among male non-manual workers (i.e. clerical and sales staff, etc.) is low in all industries. Among male manual workers rates are both higher and more variable. Turnover in food, drink and tobacco manufacturing is very high with a 1950 separation rate of 13.0%. Furniture, woodworking and sawmilling and textiles also continue to experience turnover higher than the average for all manufacturing. Lowest turnover rates in manufacturing are in the paper and printing and clothing industries. In non-manufacturing industries the lowest rates were in the mining industry and the highest in building and "all other".

Turnover rates for females are in almost all cases considerably higher than the corresponding male rates, but otherwise follow the same general pattern. Among female clerical and sales staff, labour turnover averages about 5% against about 10% for manual workers. Among female manual workers turnover rates are considerable in most manufacturing industries, especially the engineering group, food, drink and tobacco, and "all other" manufacturing but the clothing industry again stands out with the lowest rate of about 6%. Turnover among female manual workers is very high, at about 13%, in "all other" industries, which comprise mainly restaurants, hotels, laundries and other similar service industries.

II. VALUE OF STOCKS OF GOODS.

The value of stocks of goods held at annual balancing dates since 1946 and at March, 1950 are shown in Table 3. These figures are derived from Survey No. 12 and from previous surveys of stocks. The figures shown for 1949 include the value of stocks held at balancing dates occurring between about October, 1948 and September, 1949, and similarly for earlier years. Survey No. 12 asked not for balance sheet figures but for an estimate of the value of stocks held at the end of March, 1950. The change between the value of stocks shown for 1949 and the preliminary figures for March, 1950 took place over an average period somewhat longer than nine months.

TABLE 3. VALUE OF STOCKS HELD BY MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS.

	1946	1947	1948	1949	March, 1950
	£m.	£m.	£m.	£m.	£m.
Manufacturers ..	217	259	325	379	406
Wholesale Traders ..	59	88	119	138	151
Retail Traders ..	55	75	91	102	112
<u>TOTAL:</u>	331	422	535	619	669

The total of manufacturers' and wholesale and retail traders' stocks increased by about £50m. between 1949 balancing dates and March, 1950, as compared with an increase of £84m. between 1948 and 1949 and an increase of £113m. between 1947 and 1948. This represents an increase of about 8%, and if this rate of increase is maintained for the full year the total value of stocks in 1950 will be about 10% higher than in 1949. This increase is somewhat smaller than the increase in wholesale prices during the past year, and suggests that the volume of stocks has been fairly stable or has fallen slightly.

The percentage change in the value of stocks held by retailers will probably be about 12% - roughly the same as in the previous year. The change in the value of wholesalers' stocks is likely to be of the order of 12% as against 16% in the previous year and in manufacturers' stocks about 9% against 17% in the previous year.

On the whole it appears that the physical volume of stocks held by retailers has been fairly steady for the last two years, and that the volume of stocks held by wholesalers and manufacturers continued to increase up to about a year ago and has been fairly steady since.

The increase of £27m. in manufacturers' stocks between 1949 balancing dates and March, 1950 results largely from an increase of about £15m. in the engineering and vehicle building group of industries and £5m. in the food, drink and tobacco group. Most other industry groups show small increases in the value of stocks, but paper and printing and one or two other minor industries indicate small decreases. The largest percentage increases (more than 10%) have occurred in the engineering and vehicles, rubber and chemical industries. There have been moderate percentage increases in the value of stocks held by textile and food, drink and tobacco manufacturers.